

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments, and the following remarks. Claims 1-4 and 7-9 are in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112, for indefiniteness. Applicant has amended claim 1 to clarify the invention.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by *Okita et al.* Applicants respectfully traverse.

Okita et al. describes a resistance welding process for aluminum and aluminum alloy material, whereby an insert material is used to enable a remarkable improvement of the electrode life. The insert material includes a sheet-like core material consisting of iron, steel, copper or copper alloy and coated layers with a thickness of 1 to 100 μm , consisting of various materials or alloys. As can be read from column 7, lines 18 to 20 of *Okita et al.*, the coated layers (9b) and (9c) are fixed to

both surfaces of the core material (9a) by means of electroplating, hot dipping, chemical vapor deposition, cladding or the like. In contrast to the present application, the insert material (9) according to the *Okita et al.* does not consist of three superimposed strips (9a, 9b, 9c) but of one sheet-like strip (9a) with a coating on the electrode side and the material side.

Contrary to this, the present invention is characterized by a strip comprising at least two super imposed metal strips made of different materials and which are exclusively positively connected by rabbeting, gluing, stamping or welding. The advantage of the present invention is that the material of the metal strip facing the electrode during operation can be matched to the material of the electrode and the material of the metal strip facing the workpiece. This solution allows for a plurality of combinations of different strips to be realized by the user himself at extremely low storage expenditures, while obtaining an optimum welding quality. The user may select any strip combination by simply combining two strips of different materials, and can use the same at once and rapidly carry out any adaptation.

The coating of the strip as described in the *Okita et al.* cannot be done by the user of the resistance welding device. Further, the thickness of the coatings ranging from 1 to 100 μm is very low, resulting in a lower extent of protection for the electrode and therefore in a lower quality of the welding joint. Finally, the production costs for strips according to the *Okita* are extremely high due to coating or alloying.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 1-5 and 7-9 are patentable over the cited reference. Early allowance of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

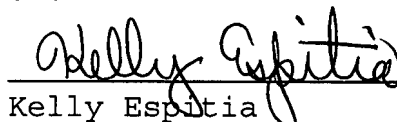
Respectfully submitted,
Walter STIEGLBAUER ET AL.



COLLARD & ROE, P.C.
1077 Northern Boulevard
Roslyn, New York 11576
(516) 365-9802
ECR:cmm

Elizabeth C Richter, Reg. No. 35,103
Attorney for Applicants

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Kelly Espitia